857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells, in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

857 The admission of new members follows. Each of them
796 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie, swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

[535] At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
[431]

1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

857 796 companion whom each n-Tomo-den' is required to choose upon his admission into the sect; she is his special girl friend and his relations with her are not merely platonic.

857 796 785 The meal is over by mid-afternoon, and the band returns to the village for a public performance during which the members beat one another. First, the n-Tomo-tigi and his syere advance to the middle of a circle of onlookers, relatives, friends, and others; the mothers wrap cloths or scarves around their hips and stomachs to protect them from serious injury. Onlookers sing and clap their hands. The n-Tomo-tigi holds his whip aloft with his arms outstretched, and the syere immediately flogs his head and shoulders, front and back, his thighs, legs, and feet; he keeps this up, the victim uttering not a single cry of pain, until he can strike no longer, either because he is exhausted or because his whip is broken.

Then it is the turn of the syere to be flogged in the same way. Following this, the n-Tomo-den' in pairs flog each other until it is the turn of the very youngest who, being less hardened, weep and scream and run away at the first blow. This naturally gives rise to laughter and mockery among the onlookers, who had greatly admired the stamina of the others.

In some places each n-Tomo-den' flagellates himself.

What is the meaning of this practice? It seems likely that originally its purpose was to emphasize the secrecy required of the n-Tomo-den' by giving them a chance to show that they would not violate [240] their oaths even under blows. It should be recalled that flogging was the common method of obtaining confessions, always considered the best proof of guilt. Thus, the practice of flagellation would to some extent enable the adepts not to confess under blows (1). The practice is also a

1. Flagellation is also practiced in certain brotherhoods for no apparent reason except that of hardening one against pain. See "The Koré" below.

means of preparing the boys to undergo circumcision without flinching, since it is a signal disgrace to show or expose pain at that time.

881 group is called kule. In the same way, the boys go about in a group headed by the sema-tye, called masa (king), followed by the masa-ma-kono, the masa-ma-kono-segere, etc.

In this way, the whole country learns which boys and girls have completed the soli.

The Fla-n-ton'

561 Those who have belonged to the same n-Tomo-ya and
572 have gone through the soli together remain bound together for
575 life; they are fula-ni ("peers," "twins") because they were born on the same day to sexual and social life. Wherever they may be and whatever their respective rank, two fula-ni consider themselves equals even if one of them is a chief and the other a slave; the latter in particular has the right to speak his mind without fear (1). Theoretically, therefore, the fula-ni is the friend on

1. See in Chapter 7, "The Man with Three Braids." [Not translated.]

whom one may safely rely, and he is usually a member of the council, small but very powerful, which every fa likes to have around. It is to him that the fa confides his troubles, his joys, his plans, and his personal affairs. He is present at all the celebrations and mourning of the family. On serious or important occasions, he represents his friend who often entrusts him with the supervision of his household during an absence and appoints him guardian or trustee of his children after his death. He is a brother who may be loved more than agnate or uterine brothers. At the same time the fulani-ya does not necessarily produce a type of brotherhood analogous to that brought about by the blood pact. Rather, it engenders a kind of mutual assistance which is strengthened by the organization called fla-n-ton', "assemblage of people of the same age," i.e., those "born" at the same soli.

The young people from the same soli form a fla-m-bolo, literally, a band of persons of the same age.

778
551 Children dedicated to the Nia: Nia-gné foula, Nia-n-ti, Nia-n-nkoro, Nia.
Children dedicated to the Kono: Mèlé, Tjétjélé, Djonké (2).

[576] 2. Djonke, a respectful appellation often applied to the master of the Kono. Tjétjélé, the password of the initiates of the Kono and its family name, or diamou. When a stranger appears at the sacrifice, he is asked the question: "E b'a la wa Wélema djonké? Are you of the sect of Wélema djonké?" Only a brother can answer: "Tjétjélé, ne b'a la. Tjétjélé, I am."

Children dedicated to the Magna: Ma-n-djé, Magna, Magné.
Children dedicated to the Djo: Djo, Djokoro, Djoméné.
Children dedicated to the Douga: Dougakoro, Douga-n-tjé.
Children dedicated to the Da: Dakoro, Da-n-son, Da-n-wélé.
Children dedicated to the Bala: Bala, Balake, Mousa and Misa (3).

3. Mousa and Misa are synonyms of Bala and not a translation of the name Moses.

778
572 It is also on a powerful boli, or rather in its presence, that the Bambara swear to an indissoluble friendship, a friendship so close that it finds the two persons and their children like a kinship tie. This is the sinnakoun! No Negro has ever been able to talk to me about it with any clarity or precision, so that I am unable to give it a very exact definition. Basing my interpretation on the custom -- widespread among the Bambara -- of a woman showing her breast in order to indicate clearly that she is the mother of a child (a wolo ba, "his

778 mother who bore him"), and on the phrase sinna dé meaning "a child
572 at the breast," I believe I can give this meaning to the word sinnakoun ("head," "tip of the breast": or again, "because of the breast"): "Between us it is as if we had sucked the same breast; therefore, we are like brothers." And /155/the persons bound by this type of friendship regard themselves as such, exchanging witticisms and light jokes without ever quarreling. Yet the Negroes are very sensitive and hardly ever allow joking. Seing such friends one would take them for kanémé, and the latter are relatives since they are maternal cousins (1).

1. A woman's children and the children of her brothers are kanémé to each other. Sinnakoun and kanémé are not impediments to marriage.

The sinnakoun between families dates from time immemorial; it appears to have no history, or at least I was unable to persuade anyone to tell me what it is. In any case, one can believe that it is a friendship sworn on a boli, or in its presence if you like, since nowadays two heads of families who wish to be united, to be sinnakoun, together redden a powerful fetish.

6. Talking Boli

778 These are supposed to bring death to anyone who scorns them.
761 Nevertheless, they are seldom blamed for death, and they bring chiefly evil spells, sorcery, and sickness. They are in the hands of so-called sorcerers, real leeches who go through villages in the dry season, always holding out their hands and begging.

778 A talking boli is usually the tail of an animal and the sacrifices
791 are made on this tail. The owner always has his instrument in an unusual skin, often the hide of a small wild animal, and he lets an end protrude. That, I believe, is his insignia, his mark of identification, unless it be the small bell he hangs on the paws of the hide and which he knows so well how to s[redacted]o notify people of his arrival.